

exceed \$100,000.00 and/or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months.

Dated: January 7, 1998.

Terry A. Reed,

Area Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Reclamation

Colusa Basin Initial Plan/Integrated Resource Management Program, Colusa Basin, California

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement/environmental impact report (EIS/EIR).

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and section 21061 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Colusa Basin Drainage District (District) plan to prepare a joint programmatic and project-level EIS/EIR for the Colusa Basin Initial Plan/Integrated Resource Management Program (Program), Colusa Basin, California. Reclamation will be the lead agency under NEPA, and the District will be the lead agency under CEQA.

Reclamation and the District have developed a Program that incorporates a variety of measures and potential projects which would meet flood protection objectives and would address long-term water management and water quality goals. Specifically, the Program would help reduce peak flood flows, reducing the potential for future flood damage. The Program would also provide opportunities to increase groundwater supplies, increase surface water storage, and increase the quantity of water available for environmental and wildlife uses. Specific projects to be considered as part of the project-level analysis include: reservoirs on Funks, Wilson and Cortina creeks; a groundwater recharge basin in the Orland-Artois area; small weirs on Sand and Salt creeks; improved management and maintenance of the Colusa Basin Drain; and improved methods to manage runoff and enhance riparian corridors.

Scoping meetings will be conducted to seek public and agency input on alternatives, concerns, and issues to be addressed in the EIS/EIR.

DATES: Two scoping meetings will be held on January 28, 1998, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and again from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Willows City Hall, 201 North Lassen Street, Willows CA 95988.

The lead agencies anticipate that the EIS/EIR will be available for public review in the summer of 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts to be considered or in regard to the scoping meetings should be sent to Mr. Steve Brown, Colusa Basin Initial Plan/Integrated Resource Management Program, 3100 Zinfandel Drive, Suite 170, Sacramento, CA 95851-0408, by February 16, 1998. Mr. Brown may be reached at (916) 852-5080 for additional information regarding the proposed project or scoping meetings.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: It has long been recognized that the Colusa Basin faces significant flooding problems during the winter and from drainage discharges during the spring and summer. On the average, estimated damage caused by wintertime flooding totals about \$1.2 million. Although rare, extreme rain-induced flooding can cause damage of disaster proportions. For instance, in 1995, estimated damages totaled in excess of \$100 million. In 1987, the District was created to address flood control, drainage, and subsidence problems occurring within the 650,000 acres of the multi-county, multi-jurisdictional Colusa Basin.

The goals of the Program are to:

- Provide flood and drainage water protection for both urban and agricultural interests;
- Preserve and sustain agricultural production, which is the mainstay of the economy within the Colusa Basin;
- Capture surface storm water for conservation, conjunctive use, and increased water supplies;
- Assist in groundwater recharge efforts to help alleviate overdraft and land subsidence problems occurring within the Colusa Basin;
- Improve and enhance opportunities for restoration of wetlands and riparian habitats; and
- Improve water quality.

These six goals have been translated into specific facility measures that would provide the greatest degree of flood protection feasible, given the topography and hydrology of the Colusa Basin. The facility measures include:

1. New Structural Facilities
 - A. Small detention dams
 - B. Construction of stock ponds

- C. Groundwater recharge in former gravel quarries
- D. Stream bed restoration through construction of weirs to slow down storm water and sediment transport

2. Improved Operations and Maintenance of Existing Facilities

- A. Potential diversion and redirection of flood flows for groundwater recharge
- B. Removal of obstructions in the Colusa Drain
3. New Nonstructural Facilities
 - A. Stream bed/riparian corridor enhancement through programs such as "Adopt a Watershed"
 - B. Implementation of Best Management Practices
 - Orchards
 - Grazing lands
 - Other crops (including rice straw decomposition)
 - C. Environmental Enhancements
 - Wetlands creation
 - Revegetation of the Colusa Drain and other waterways with native plants
 - Habitat creation

In addition to the Program measures identified above, Reclamation and the District prioritized areas in which potential projects would meet the Program goals and provide the greatest overall benefits. Specifically, nine projects were identified that would improve the Colusa Drain and achieve the goals most cost effectively. A broad-based local task force consisting of agricultural and environmental interests; urban and rural officials; Federal, State, and local agencies; and technical experts participated in a series of public workshops and meetings where four of these projects were given the highest priority for early implementation of the Program. These projects include the Funks Creek Reservoir, the Wilson Creek Reservoir, the Orland-Artois Groundwater Recharge, and the Cortina Creek Reservoir. Reclamation and the District would also implement a project to maintain and enhance the Colusa Drain and construct a water quality/flow monitoring system throughout the Colusa Basin. Other projects consistent with the Program may be implemented in the future.

Dated: January 8, 1998.

Kirk C. Rodgers,

Deputy Regional Director.

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